



Managing Chapter 980 Cases in the Community: Roles, Rules and Responsibilities

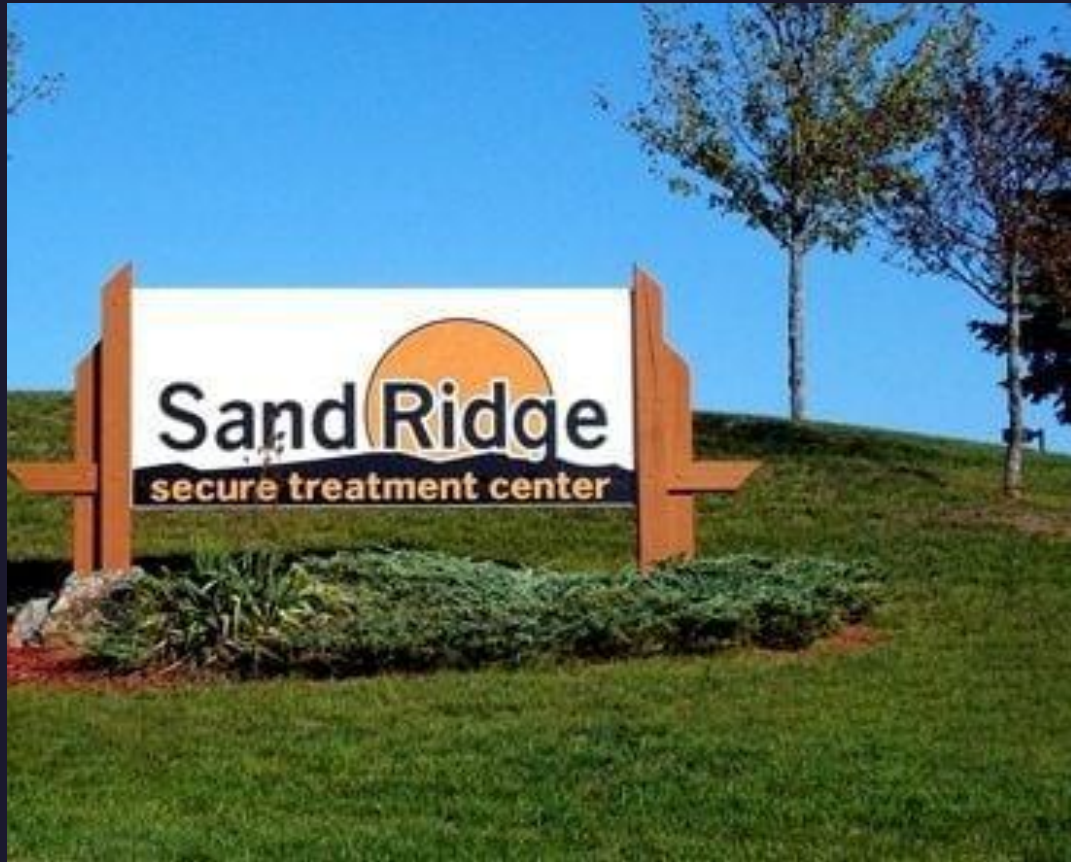
3:30 – 4:30 pm

Wisconsin Counties Association 2026 Annual Conference:

Ch. 980 Sexually Violent Person Commitments

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Wisconsin Department of Justice





Agenda: Ch. 980

- What is it
- Purpose
- Statutory Mechanisms for Release
- Supervised Release Overview

Sexually Violent Person Commitments

- Involuntary, post-sentence commitment of sexually violent people
- 3 elements:
 - Convicted of a sexually violent offense (enumerated under Wis. Stat. § 980.01(5-6))
 - Suffers from a mental disorder (an acquired or congenital condition affecting one's emotional or volitional capacity that predisposes the person to engage in acts of sexual violence and causes serious difficulty in controlling behavior). Wis. Stat. § 980.01(2).
 - Is dangerous to others because the person's mental disorder makes it more likely that not that the person will engage in one or more future acts of sexual violence

Wis. Stat. § 980.01(7)

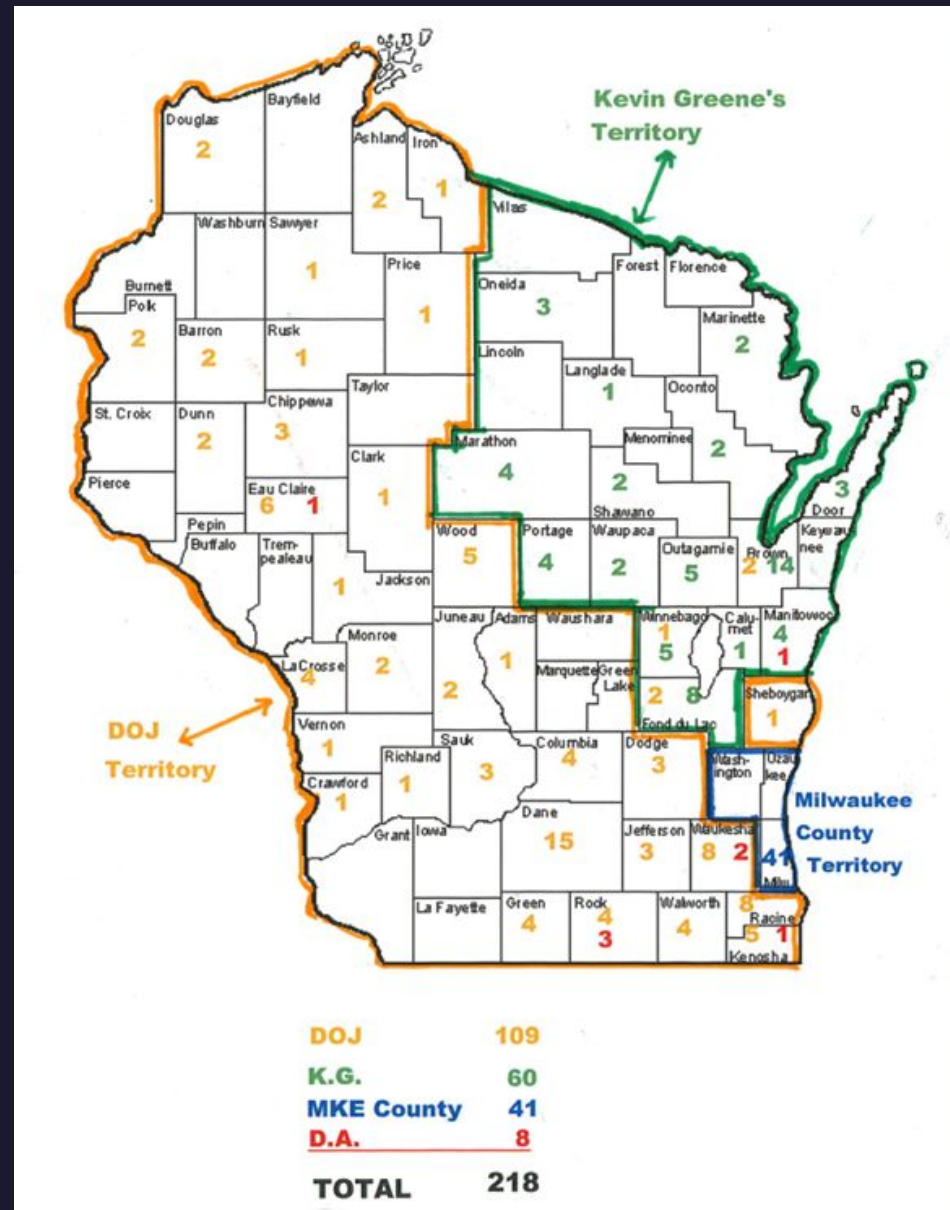
- The Wisconsin Department of Justice prosecutes most cases with original jurisdiction. There are also statutory regional Ch. 980 prosecutors in Brown and Milwaukee Counties.
- If found to be a sexually violent person, the person is committed to the care and custody and control of the Department of Health Services for treatment. Wis. Stat. § 980.06.

Sexually Violent Person Commitments

- After initial commitment, the SVP resides in Sandridge Secure Treatment Center in Mauston, WI. He is a patient (Respondent), not an inmate (Defendant). Treatment is offered and voluntary. If the patient consents to treatment, he is advised that his discussions with providers are not confidential and will be shared with the court. Wis. Stat. § 980.07.



Numbers as of 3/2/26



Purpose

- Keeps public safe from mentally disordered people who engage in acts of sexual violence
- Commitments are for public safety/treatment, not punishment. Treatment is available to address mental disorders symptomology, and to identify risk factors linked to sex offending



Sexually Violent Person Commitments

- Commitment is indefinite and continues as long as the person remains a sexually violent person
- Patients can petition to be discharged and/or to be placed on supervised release. Wis. Stat. § 980.08/09.
- For discharge, the patient must show a change in condition such that a factfinder would likely conclude the patient is no longer a sexually violent person. State bears the burden of proving elements at trial by clear and convincing evidence. Wis. Stat. § 980.09(3).
 - 6-person JT, 5/6ths verdict, or a trial to the court
- For supervised release, the patient has the burden of proving by clear and convincing evidence that he meets supervised release criteria. Wis. Stat. § 980.08(4)(cj).

Supervised Release Criteria

- Multiple criteria outlined in 980.08(4)(cg) and 980.01(8)
 - Making **significant progress in treatment** and progress can be maintained on SR
 - Substantially probable that the person will not in an act of sexual violence while on supervised release
 - Treatment that meets the person's needs and a qualified provider are reasonably available
 - Person can be reasonably expected to comply with treatment requirements and with all of his conditions/rules imposed by the court and DHS
 - Reasonable level of resources can provide for the level of residential placement, supervision, and ongoing treatment needs required for safe management of the person



Significant Progress in Treatment

Wis. Stat. § 980.01(8)

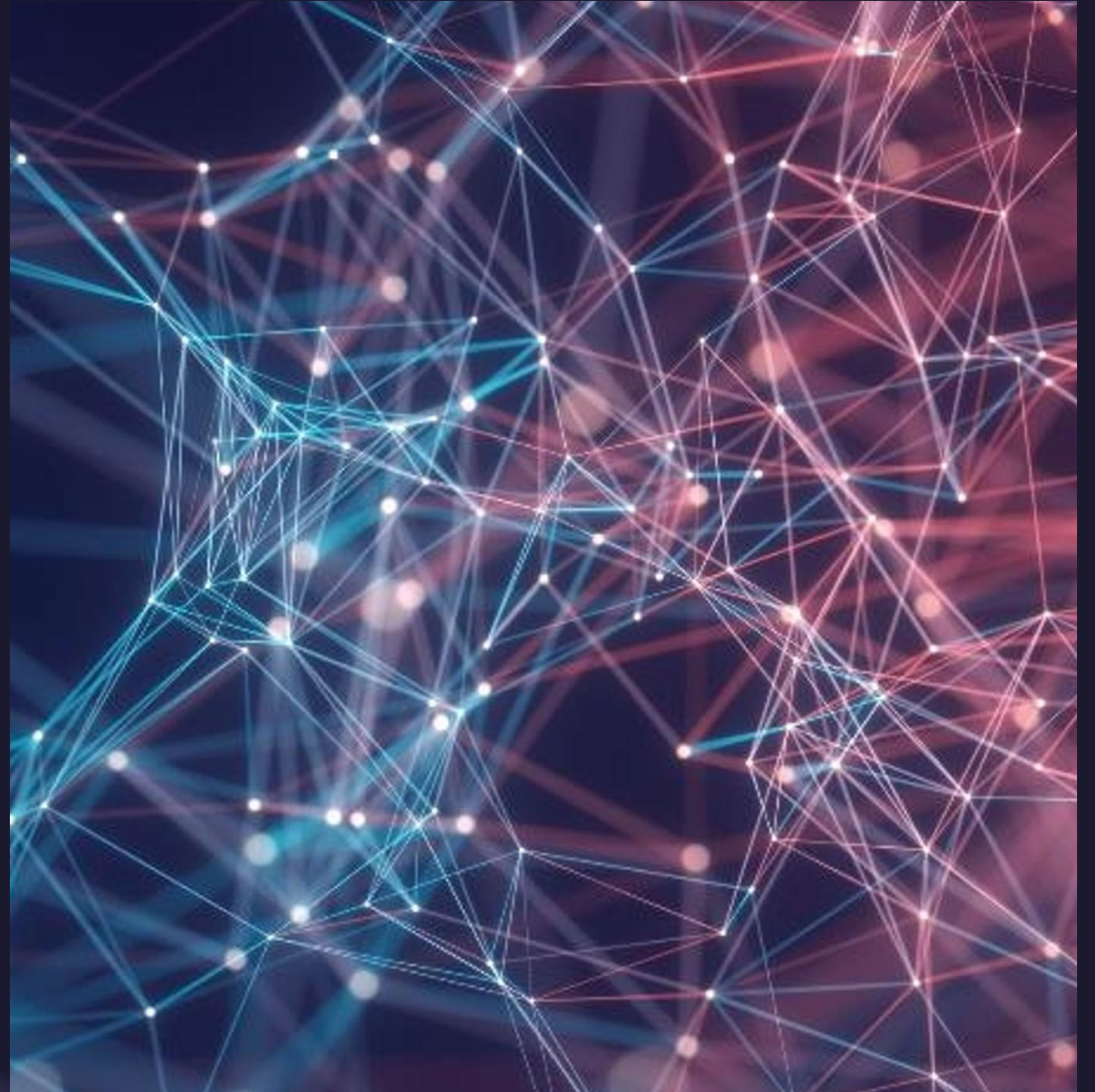
- Meaningfully participating in the treatment program specifically designed to reduce his risk to reoffend
- Participating at a level that is sufficient to identify his treatment needs and demonstrating through overt behavior a willingness to work on addressing the specific treatment needs
- Demonstrating sufficiently sustained change in thoughts, attitudes, emotions, behaviors, and sexual arousal linked to sexual offending, and an ability to identify when those things occur
- Demonstrating a sufficiently sustained change in thoughts, attitudes, emotions, and behaviors and sufficient management of sexual arousal that one could reasonably assume that with continued treatment, the change could be maintained

Discharge/Supervised Release

- Discharge from commitment means no supervision, or rules, unless the person is still on DOC supervision for their underlying offense. The person is just released with no further obligations to the Court.
- If the court finds the person meets criteria for Supervised Release, placement is in the person's county of residence. The court orders the county to create a temporary committee to locate a placement. Wis. Stat. § 980.09(dm).
- The county shall submit its report of the placement to DHS within 120 days following the court order. Each day the county does not submit the report violates the person's rights under section 51.61, and constitutes a new violation. The county can be ordered to pay damages and attorney fees. Wis. Stat. § 980.08(dm)(4).

Questions??

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Process for Locating Supervised Release Placements in the Community

STEP 1:

Court Orders a Report

WISCONSIN STATUTE

§ 980.08(4)(dm)1

RESPONSIBLE PARTY

County of person's residence,
through Temporary Committee

STEP 2:

Create Temporary Committee to Prepare Report

WISCONSIN STATUTE

§ 980.08(4)(dm)1

RESPONSIBLE PARTY

County*

Temporary Committee **must** consist of the following:

- County Department (§ 51.42)
- DHS Representative
- Local parole or probation officer
- County Corporation Counsel or designee
- County Land Use/Information representative

STEP 3:

Find Available Residence Meeting Criteria

WISCONSIN STATUTE

§ 980.08(4)(dm)1.a., b., and c.

RESPONSIBLE PARTY

County/Committee

STEP 4:

Contact Landlord & Confirm Commitment to Enter Lease

WISCONSIN STATUTE

§ 980.08(4)(dm)1

RESPONSIBLE PARTY

County

STEP 5:

Consult Local Law Enforcement with Jurisdiction Over Residential Option (4)

WISCONSIN STATUTE

§ 980.08(4)(dm)2

RESPONSIBLE PARTY

County

STEP 5a:

*Optional: Law Enforcement Submits Written
Report Relating to Residence*

WISCONSIN STATUTE

§ 980.08(4)(dm)2

RESPONSIBLE PARTY

Local Law Enforcement

STEP 6:

Report Identifies Residence

WISCONSIN STATUTE

§ 980.08(4)(dm)1

RESPONSIBLE PARTY

County

STEP 9:

Submit Report to DHS

WISCONSIN STATUTE

§ 980.08(4)(dm)4

RESPONSIBLE PARTY

County, within 120 days of court
order (1)

STEP 13:

**Ensure Residence Complies with (dm) and
Report Same to Court *[New as of 4/3/26]***

WISCONSIN STATUTE

§ 980.08(4)(fm)

RESPONSIBLE PARTY

County, prior to court's approval of
SR Plan

STEP 16a:

**If SR is Inadequate Due to Residential Option:
Court Orders New Report Prepared**

WISCONSIN STATUTE

§ 980.08(4)(g)

RESPONSIBLE PARTY

County (see 1, above)

Supervised Release Program Overview

WCA Conference Presentation

September 21, 2026

Kim Dexter, Supervised Release Program Liaison



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
of **HEALTH SERVICES**

Vision

To reduce recidivism by supporting the successful reintegration of civilly committed clients with histories of sexual offending as they transition into the community.

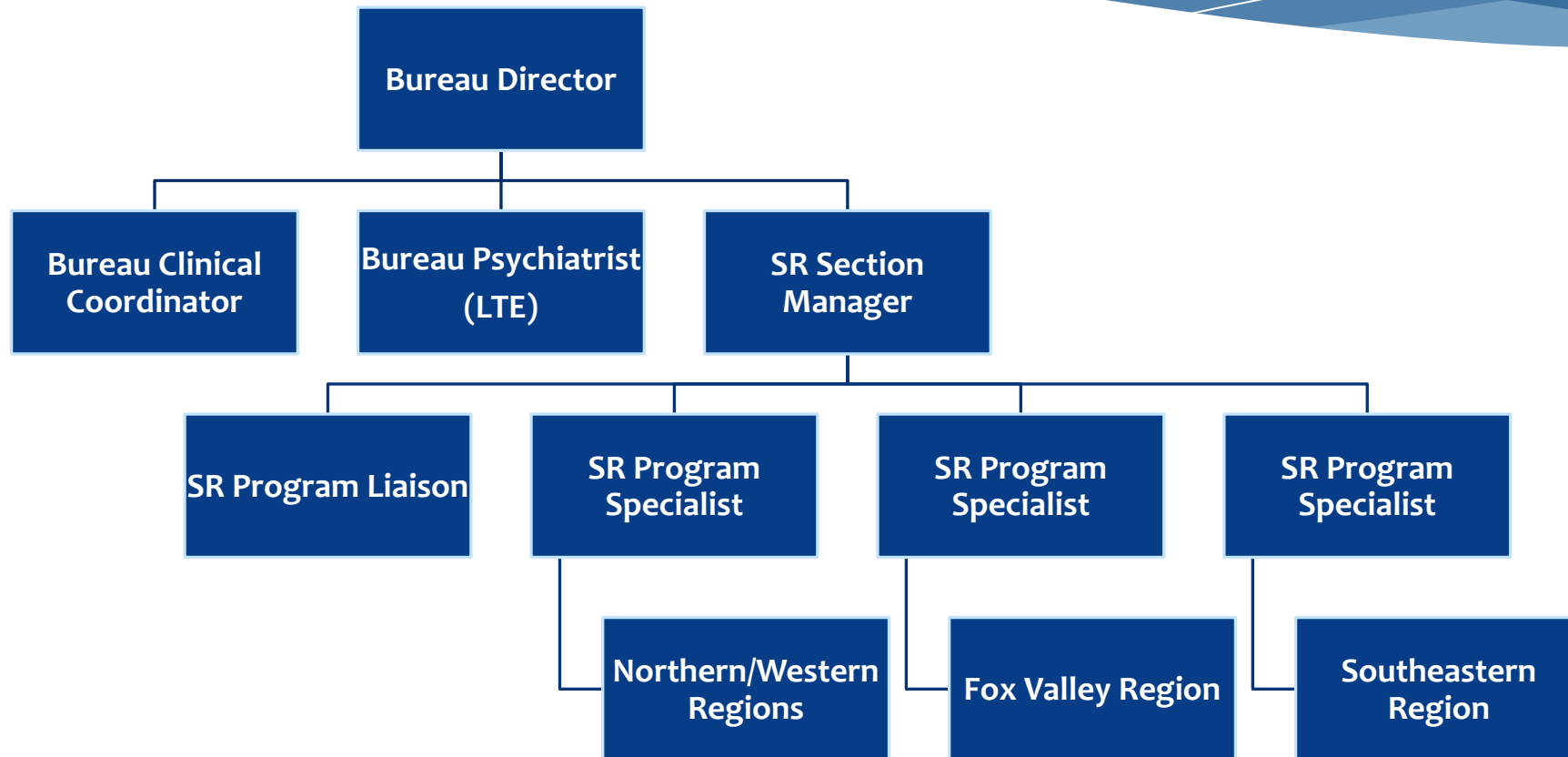
Mission

The Supervised Release Program promotes successful transition to independent community living by using evidence-based practices to enhance public safety.

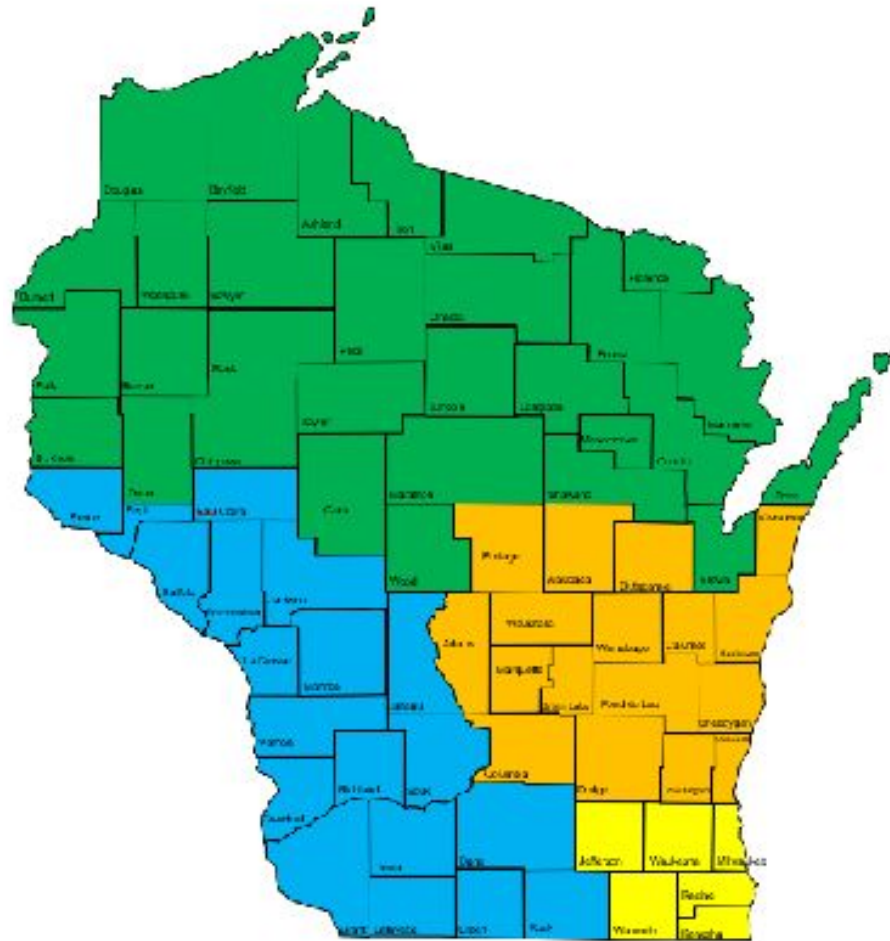
Supervised Release Principles

- * Team-based approach
- * Community safety
- * Client-centered planning
- * Evidence-based practices
- * Reintegration focus (sustainable independence)
- * Good stewards of taxpayer money

SR Program Make-up



Case Management Regions



	NORTHERN REGION
	WESTERN REGION
	FOX VALLEY
	SOUTHEASTERN REGION

Supervised Release Team

- * Contracted Case Manager
- * Department of Corrections Probation and Parole Agent
- * Sex Offender Treatment (SOT) Provider
- * WI DHS Supervised Release Contract Specialist (oversight)



Safety Measures

- * Wisconsin Sex Offender Registry Program
- * GPS monitoring bracelet
- * Supervised release rules
- * Chaperoned monitoring
- * Searches
- * Polygraph testing
- * Announced and unannounced visits to the residence
- * Adjustments to treatment/supervision
- * Revocation

First-Year Monitoring

- * Client can't leave the residence without having a monitor present.
- * Monitor is a contracted staff providing in-person monitoring (supervision) of the client.
- * This monitoring is direct supervision: the client is within sight, sound, and physical access of the monitor.
- * Monitors may be present when visits occur in the residence

Allowable Activities for First Year Clients

Employment

Exercise

Home maintenance
(lawn mowing and
snow removal)

Medical
appointments

Religious or
spiritual services

Education

Sex offender
treatment

Shopping for daily
needs (groceries,
clothing, etc.)

Volunteer work

Mental health
treatment

Home Visits/Checks

- * Monitors check the client's home.
- * Home visits may occur at all hours of the day and night.
- * Monitors may conduct site visits where client is employed, attending school, etc.
- * These visits are done at scheduled and unscheduled times.

Supervised Release Rules

- * There are 36 or more rules for clients to follow.
- * These rules are approved by the court as part of the Supervised Release Plan.
- * Violations may result in the revocation of the client's supervised release.
- * The client receives more privileges after the first year if they demonstrate the willingness to follow the rules.

Violations

- * Violation
- * Custody
- * Investigation
- * SRT consult
- * Statement of Probable Cause for Detention and Petition for Revocation of Supervised Release filed within 72 hours (excluding holidays/weekends)
- * Court hearing on petition within 30 days unless timeline is waived
- * Final decision by the Court to be made within 90 days of petition being filed

Violation Outcomes

- * Not all violations lead to custody and revocation
- * Verbal warnings or written violation reports
- * Community alternative to revocation (ATR)
- * Institution-based ATR (ordered by court)
- * Revocation (ordered by court)
- * Petition dismissed (ordered by court)

Costs of Living

- * Clients must disclose income sources to Department of Health Services.
- * Clients must contribute to their cost of living as they are able to do so.

The Department of Health Services covers most of the client's cost of living expenses in most cases.

Discharge

- * SRT helps client prepare for discharge from civil commitment
- * Client must petition the court for discharge
- * When ordered discharged, order is stayed for up to 10 working days to allow for discharge
- * Local residency ordinances are applicable upon discharge
- * Securing housing after discharge is challenging

Annual Costs

Average annual cost per client

Supervised Release \$119,000

Sand Ridge Secure Treatment Center \$278,000

Statistics

(August 2026)

57

Clients currently placed
in the community

10

Clients awaiting to be placed
in the community

312

(as of 12/31/25)

Clients placed in the history of the program

Statistics

(As of December 2025)

133

Clients who discharged while on supervised release

122

Clients who have had their supervised release order revoked

3

Clients with new sex offense convictions while on supervised release

DHS Contacts

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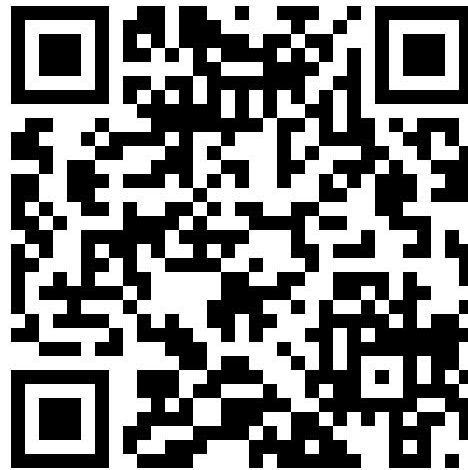
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Questions



www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/sr